3/26/75

Manager, WNET-TV
Channel 13
New York, N.Y.

Dear Sir,

Your station has deceived and defrauded me. I therefore write to request redress of a legitimate grevance and a request that you do what remains within your power to do to reduce the extra work and cost this puts me to. Today alone it meant writing three unnecessary letters to those who saw the Black Journal show on which I appeared, aired by you last Wednesday.

I also remind you that if I had not kep my word you would have been put to not inconsiderable cost and trouble because those others scheduled to have appeared with me did not. You'd have had nothing in the can.

When I was asked to appear I asked two things: because I am broke my expenses be repaid. I was promised this plus hotel accomodations. I stayed with friends and saved you the hotel bill. (My other expenses have not yet been repaid and I pay interest on my debt.) And because my books are not in the bookstores I asked that the audiences be told how to write me. This I was promised. Without it I would not have done the show. There is no commercial station, which survives on advertising, which has not done this. Without this I would not have taken two unpaid days from my work. Because for no apparent reason the taping was delayed it cost me a third day. The taping was not completed on schedule and there was no way of leaving New York, even at that late hour, with the need to travel further after lasting the commercial transportation.

Prior to my leaving for New York the original agreement was amended. You would not say how I could be reached but in adding the line with my name you would include my address. I agreed. You then did not do this. I asked that the information be supplied to those stations to which you syndicate the show. You would not even permit them independent decision. You refused.

By these means you deceived me, defrauded me, and have since abused me by requiring that I respond to individual letters for which, without your breach of our agreement, there would have been no need.

I am 62 years old, work a day never less than 18 hours, and do this all without income or subsidy. Having no interest in personal publicity and great interest in the work I have undertaken, I find what your station did to me even more abusive. As a matter of fact, for other reasons entirely, I spoke to your counsel prior to the taping. He raised no objections then. He phoned me when I was just sitting and waiting for some hours because your people asked me to appear hours before they wanted me.

What you did was abusive of your audience, too, and resulted in a futility for many, as I also made specific in advance. Mine is the one book on the King assassination not in accord with the official mythology. It is not on commercial sale anywhere and it is four years old. (Your stations has an interesting prejudicial, biased and consistent record on this, too, which is a separate matter of which you have no reason to be proud and on which you failed your license responsibilities.)

I also have a current book. It is, too, one of a kind and quite topical and germane to the subject of the show. (I enclose a copy of a Washington Post story dealing with a limited aspect.) I had and specified I had no interest in an appearance that did not include the current book. Your people agreed and got a copy from me.

We spent about 10 minutes on this current book. It was entirely edited out of the show. Even the most casual mention of it. If you have a right to edit, I also have a right to expect you to keep your word regardless of who gives it for you. I would not appear on any show today that involved any censorship of my current work. Particularlt with its content.

None of this is a personal complaint about Mr. Tony Brown, to whom I never spoke until after I was in NewYork and who I found to be an intelligent, perceptive and fair host.

When I learned in New York - in your studios - that you have broken your word to me, I asked that you provide the stations to which you syndicate with the information you refuse to air so at the very least their phone operators could privide it. This also was refused.

I asked a friend to phone WETA, give this information and askx that it be provided. He was told that it would violate your and their "non-commercial" license. That surely is news to me when I have for so many years seen no exception to the practise of giving free advertising to those commercial enterptizes which make contributions. (Unlike them I can't even take mine from my income taxes.) It is news also when I have never ever seen a PBS program dealing with a book when the identification of the publisher was denied. As a matter of fact, looking toward the future and interested in policy, I phoned WETA the first time possible <u>after</u> their airing of your show. I have not had the common courtesy of a call-back.

Nor have you extended this same common courtesy, of any kind of communication, any kind of regret, or of apology for this unconscionable waste of my time then and since then.

Over the past decade this is not a unique experience with your station. But this time I am not willing to forget it all a other time. You have been biased and have made you license a license for being a partisan, aside from this Black Journal show.

I therefore begin with the request that you compensate me as AFTRA agreements specify for my appearance on your station and all those to which you syndicated my appearance. I also expect something reasonable from you by way of an offer for the time you have been and probably will be wasting for me from violating the agreement under which I appeared.

I also tell you frankly that I am distressed that stations called "public" conduct their affairs as you and WETA have with me.

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg

cc: Manager, WETA-TV